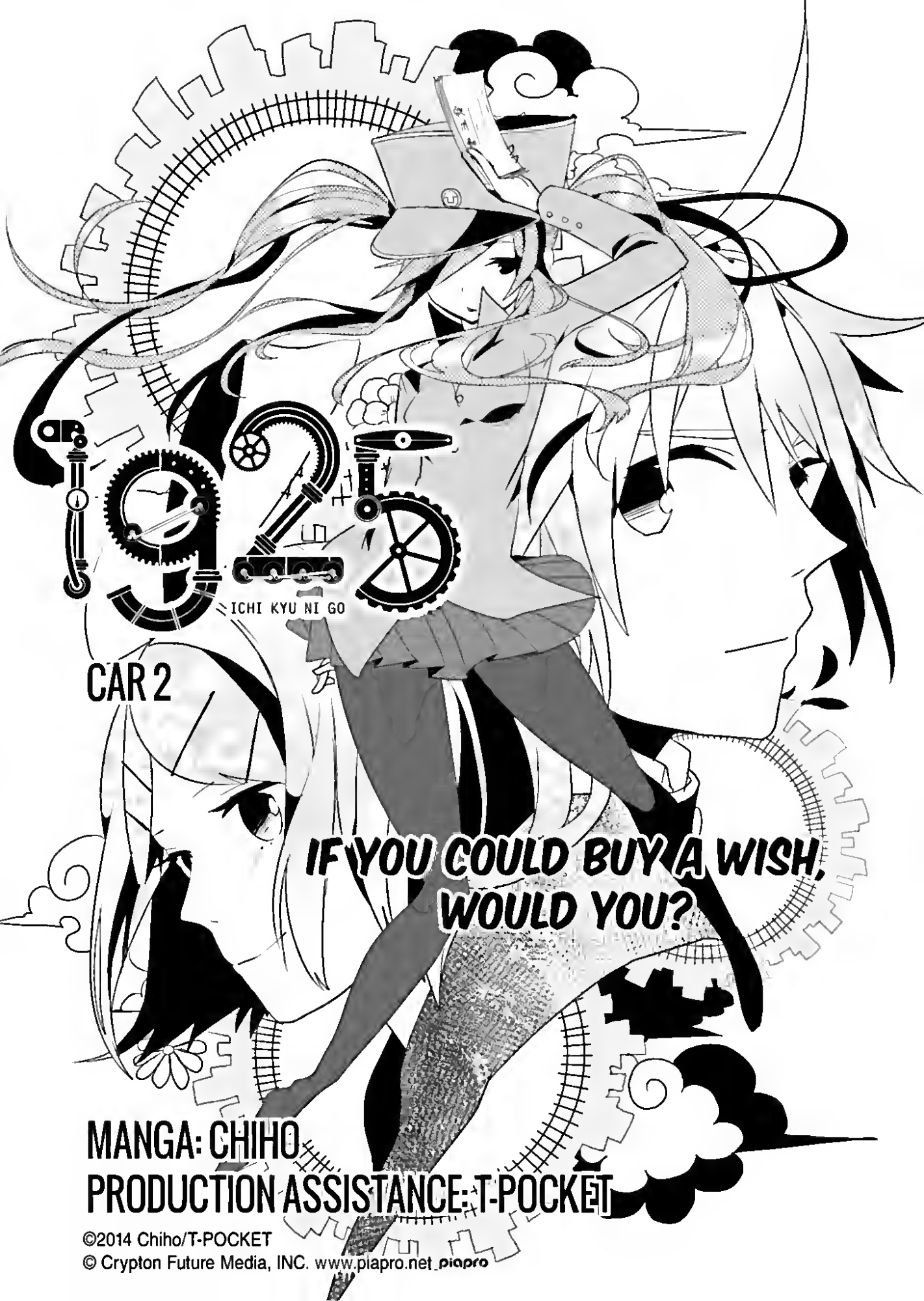

MANGA: CHIHO
PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE: T-POCKET

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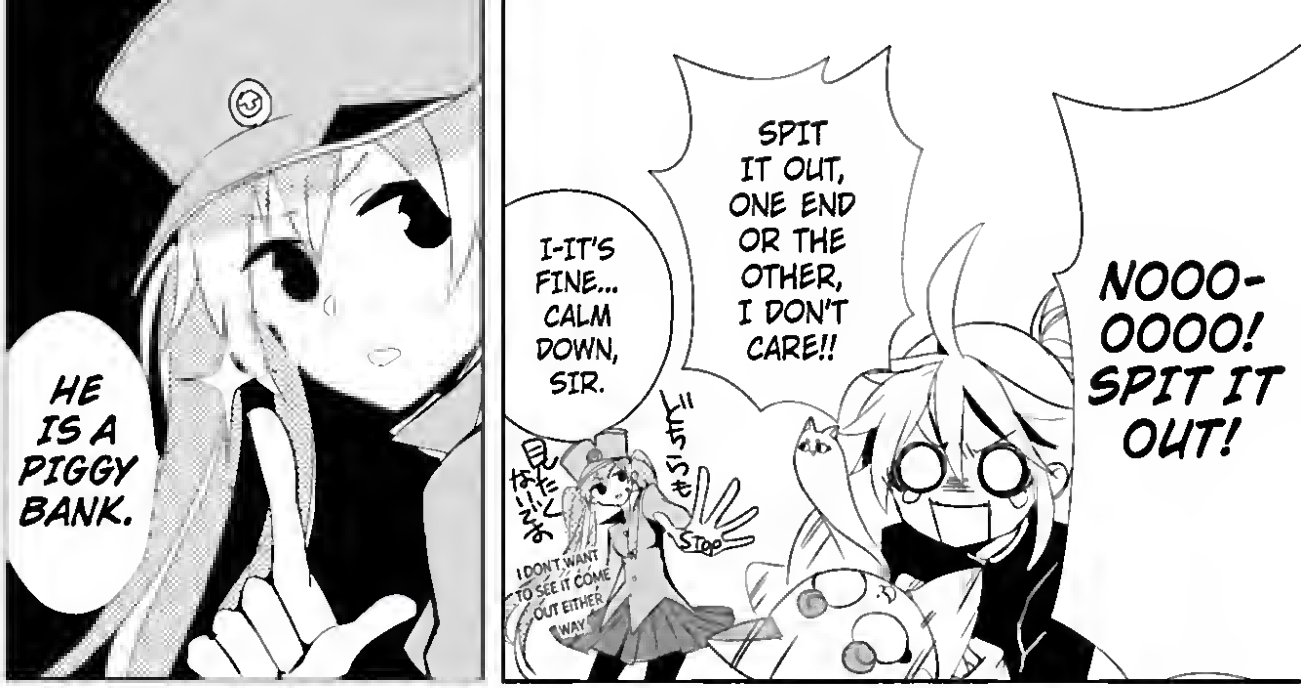
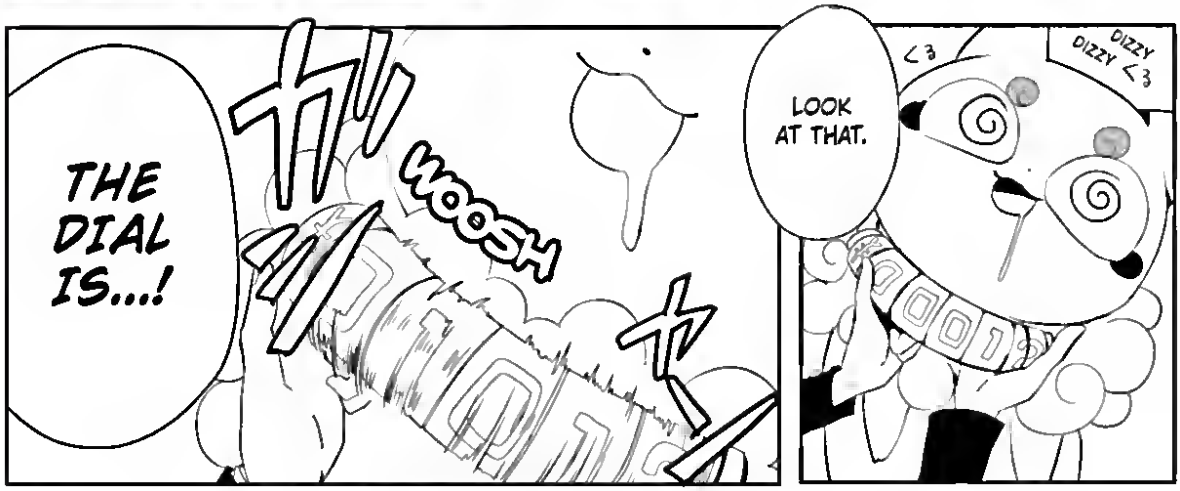
BOM
THE DAY OF THE VISIT.
YAY, MONEY!
お金だー！
わ！
ビクニ
MISERY
I HAD TO PAWN EVERYTHING I OWN...AND MY RADIO WAS BRAND NEW TOO.
YOU'VE REALLY AND TRULY CLEANED ME OUT.
HOW'S THAT?
ドヤ
ALL RIGHT, RICH BOY!! I KNEW A KID LIKE YOU COULD DO IT!!
OKAY.
BUT IF THIS IS WHAT I HAVE TO DO TO FIX THIS...
EXCUSE ME.
RIN...!!
JINGLE JINGLE
JINGLE JINGLE
AA-AAA-AHH-HH!!!
AUU-UGH-HHH!!

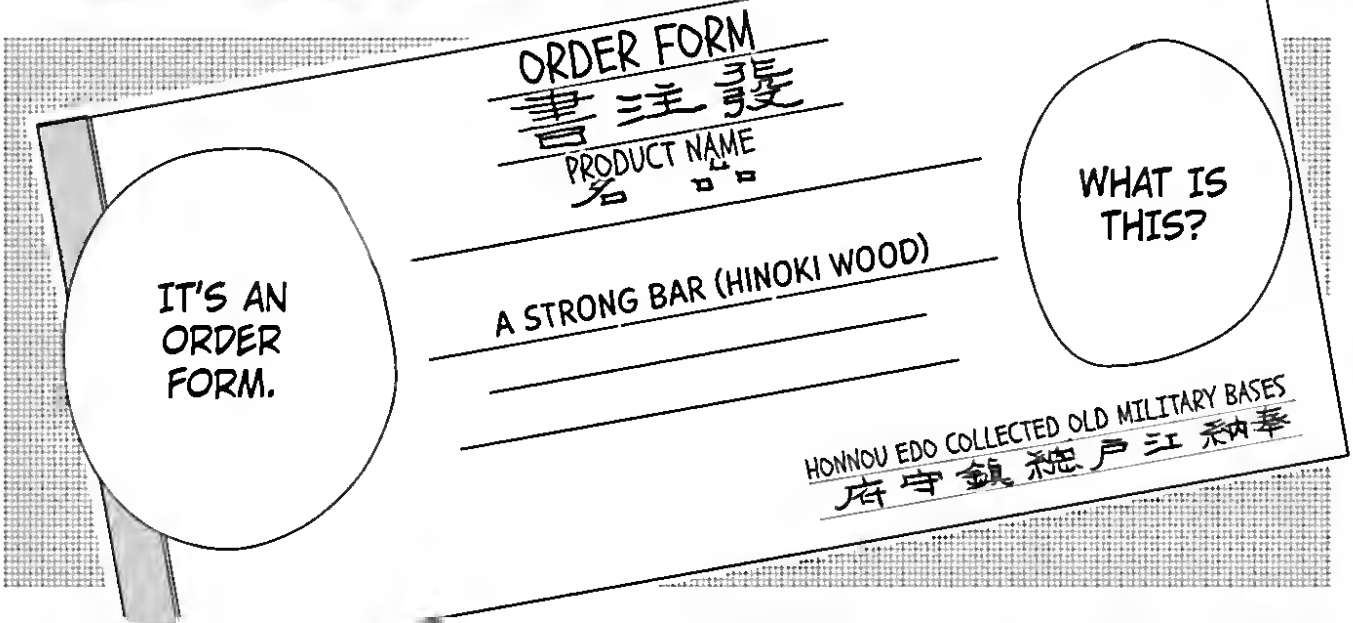

HE IS A PIGGY BANK.
I-IT'S FINE... CALM DOWN, SIR.
SPIT IT OUT, ONE END OR THE OTHER, I DON'T CARE!!
NOOO-OOOO! SPIT IT OUT!
I DON'T WANT TO SEE IT COME OUT EITHER WAY
STOP


THE DIAL IS...!
WOOSH
LOOK AT THAT.
DIZZY
DIZZY

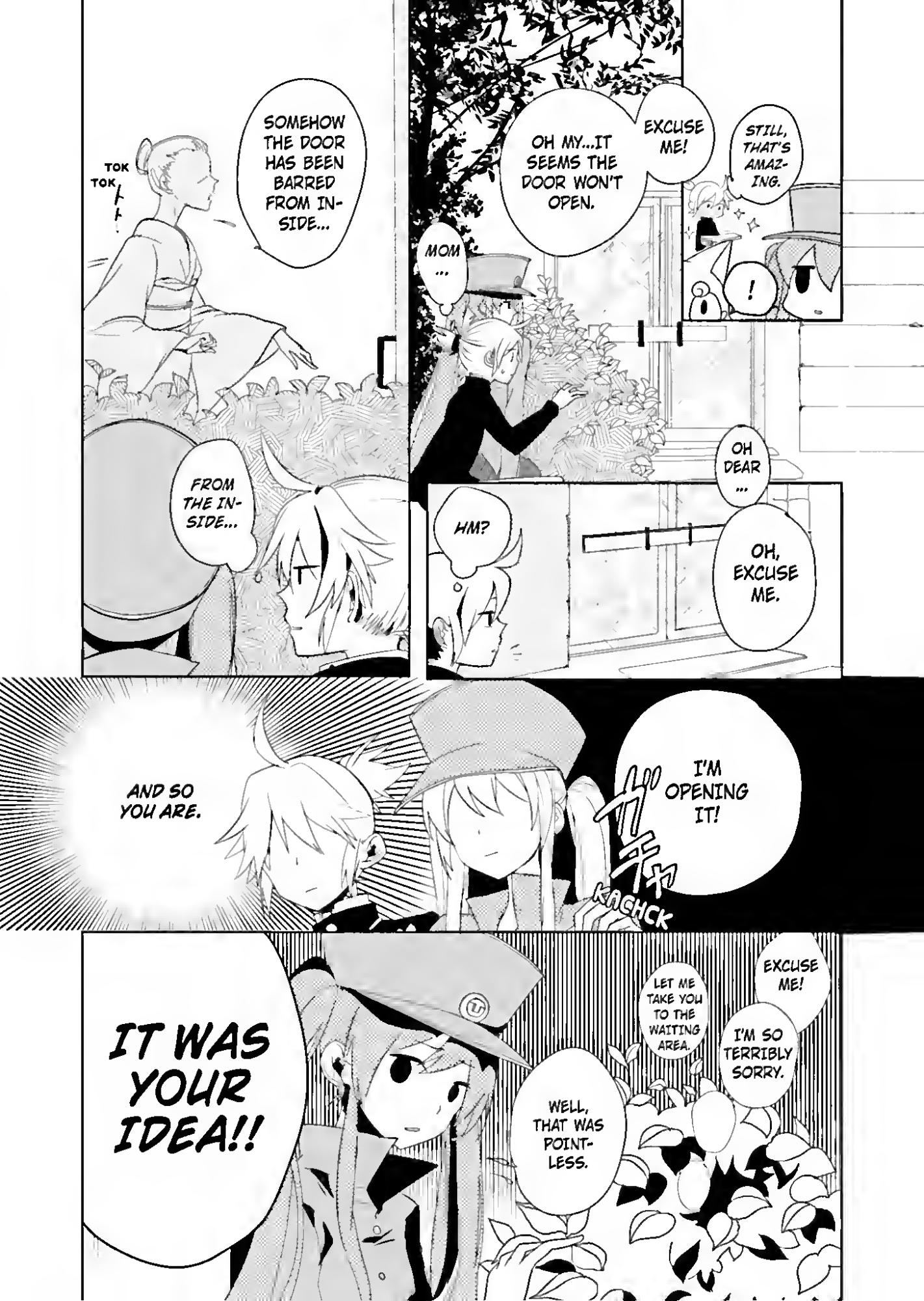
UM?
A SHOVEL? SCOP?
ME?
A FANCY TRADITIONAL RESTAU-RANT IN AKIHABARA CALLED RO-MANTEI.
I'M SHACHI-HAKO, A SHIISA BANK. EVERY-BODY NEEDS ONE 'A ME.
I'M A MYSTERY A MYSTERY-
WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING...?
SFX: HMPH!
... WHERE TO?
WELL, SINCE WE'VE GOT-TEN OUR FUNDING...
FUND-ING?

KACHACK
KACHACK
HEY, HEY, C'MON KID, WORK IT!
PUT YOUR BACK INTO IT, YA PUNK!
JEEZ.
BOM
WELL, IT'S A STEAM TRAIN, DON'T YA KNOW. IF YA DON'T STOKE THE FIRE WITH COAL, IT AIN'T GONNA GO ANYWHERE. GET IT?
YEAH, BUT...
HUP
SHK
COAL?!
WHY AM I THE ONE WHO HAS TO DO THIS?!
BG I'M NOT GOING TO DO SOMETHING ANNOYING LIKE THAT
WELL, MIKU'S KINDA...
.....
AHAHA. C'MON KID...A SCARY FACE LIKE THAT DOESN'T SUIT YA...
SMILE, C'MON, SMILE!
.....

I TURNED ON THE STEALTH CAPABILITIES JUST IN CASE.
WHERE'S THE TRAIN?
IT'S SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE.
I MEAN, WE RODE IT HERE...
WE MADE IT JUST IN TIME... WE'RE HERE AHEAD OF THEM...!
SLUMP...
GLANCE..
ANYHOW, FIRST LET'S TRY BLOCKING THE DOOR.
WAVE
HUH?


ORDER FORM
書注設
PRODUCT NAME
名品
A STRONG BAR (HINOKI WOOD)
WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S AN ORDER FORM.
HONNOU EDO COLLECTED OLD MILITARY BASES
本能江戸鎮守府

FIRST YOU WRITE THE ITEM YOU WANT ON THE FORM.
A BAR
SHRI
IIP
AND THEN YOU TEAR IT OFF THE PACK.
THEN YOU FEED IT TO SHACHI-HOKO.
NARM!
EEP!
!?
CHOMP
CHOMP CHOMP
BURP!
AND THEN, WONDER OF WON-DERS...
...THE ITEM IS SENT TO YOU!
SHWOOP
?!
FROM THE FOURTH DIMEN-SION?!
A STRONG BAR (AINOAI WOOD)
COST - 12 YEN
AND NOW, WE CAN LOCK THEM OUT AND HAVE PEACE OF MIND.
HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT?
KER
CHUNK
OOOHH!!
IS...
IS THAT MAGIC?!
NO, IT'S JUST MAIL ORDER.
IT'S BOUGHT WITH THE MONEY INSIDE SHACHIHOKO, AND SENT HERE.
OH. THE NUMBERS WENT DOWN...
WAIT, THAT COST 12 YEN?!
AH, WELL, Y'KNOW... THERE'S ALL SORTSA DIF-FERENT TYPES OF PRICING OUT THERE, Y'KNOW.


TOK TOK
SOMEHOW THE DOOR HAS BEEN BARRED FROM IN-SIDE...
FROM THE IN-SIDE...
MOM ...
OH MY...IT SEEMS THE DOOR WON'T OPEN.
EXCUSE ME!
STILL, THAT'S AMAZ-ING.
!
HM?
OH DEAR ...
OH, EXCUSE ME.
AND SO YOU ARE.
I'M OPENING IT!
KACHCK
IT WAS YOUR IDEA!!
WELL, THAT WAS POINT-LESS.
LET ME TAKE YOU TO THE WAITING AREA.
EXCUSE ME!
I'M SO TERRIBLY SORRY.

WELL, SO WE LET THEM IN, AND NOW WE HAVE TO FIGURE OUT SOME WAY TO STOP THE MATCH.
I MEAN, YES...
...UM, A MAID?
VERY GOOD LISTENING, SIR!! IT IS FOR INFILTRATION!
SHACHIHOKO DIDN'T NEED ONE, THOUGH.
UH!
THUMP
WE JUST HAVE TO GET THE MOST IMPORTANT GUY ANGRY!
W-
SHFF
TAG MEN'S SMALL
WELL, IT'S FINE. I ALSO PREPARED ONE FOR Y—
OPERATION "LET US ESCORT YOU HOME, SIR!"
もしゃCHMP
もしゃCHMP
MAID OUTFIT
COST - 20 YEN

EXCUSE ME!
LOOKS LIKE SHE MANAGED TO SNEAK ON IN.
AND THERE'S RIN...
AW, DON'T BE MAD, IT WAS A TOTAL JOKE, KID.
DON'T USE MY MONEY FOR FRIV-OLOUS JOKES!
WHISPER
LOOKS LIKE THE GIRL'S FAMILY'S HERE.
THE GUY'S FAMILY'S BEEN IN THERE FOR A WHILE, SO I S'POSE THEY'RE ABOUT TO START THIS MEETING.
GO MIKU GO! BREAK UP THAT MARRIAGE!
IS SHE BRING-ING SOUP IN THAT WAGON?
CLATTER CLATTER CLATTER
TMP TMP TMP
.....
HEY, KID!! IT'S MIKU!!
I HAVE BROUGHT THE SOUP.
HE'S SAID TO BE QUITE BRIL-LIANT.
WE'VE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT YOUR SON.

YOU THERE!
HOW DARE YOU DO THAT TO MR. TEN-NOZU?
HMPH
IT'S FINE.
MR. TEN-NOZU!!!!
WHOOPS, MY HAND SLIPPED!
THOUGH IT'S JUST A DUST RAG.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, PLEASE WIPE WITH THIS.
SHF
I WOULDN'T WANT TO LET SOMETHING LIKE THIS RAIN ON YOUR SPECIAL DAY.
MR. TEN-NOZU...!
PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT.
OPERATION SOUP WAS THE WEAK-EST OF MY MANY PLANS.
FWISH
THIS ISN'T... THIS ISN'T OVER.
I BET THEY DID!
MESSED UP
THEY BEAT ME UP.

SHE REALLY LIKES TO LOOK THE PART, AND ALL.
PRACTICAL NINJA COSTUME [3 AUNAI INCLUDED]
COST - 10 YEN.
UM... WHAT MIGHT YOUR HOBBIES BE?
SFX CHEW CHEW
CHOMP
STEAK
SHE'S DEFINITELY JUST HAVING FUN NOW.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS ONE FOR MY NEXT TRY!
BAKUMATSU BUSHIDO FULL-DRESS SHINSENGUMI OUTFIT
COST: 18 YEN
THESE MODERN PLACES ARE SO LOVELY. I'VE NEVER SEEN A MAID BEFORE...
I'M GLAD TO SEE THAT YOU HAVE SUCH REFINED INTERESTS.
I FEEL LIKE WEIRD THINGS HAVE BEEN COMING UP TO GET IN THE WAY FOR A BIT...
MR. TENNOZU,
LET'S GO TALK IN THE GARDEN!
SO.

TO BE HONEST, I AM SOMEWHAT INTERESTED IN MAID CLOTHING, YOU SEE...
ヒソ
SHOCK
AW MAN, NO WAY! THIS GUY'S ONE OF THOSE COSPLAY WEIRDOS.
OH MY! WHAT A GENTLE-MANLY INTEREST THAT IS!
DON'T JUST GO ALONG WITH IT!
ME TOO...
I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL LIKE THIS MIGHT BE A FETISH THING...
HE'S HOLDING ON PRETTY WELL.
YEAH, BUT...
I'LL KILL HIM.
NO, WAIT, I CAN'T LET THEM SEE ME.
WOW, KID, YOUR SISTER'S GOOD AT THIS.
SHWIP
YOUR BLONDE HAIR IS RE-MINISCENT OF AN ENGLISH GIRL'S, SO I'M SURE A LOLITA MAID OUTFIT WOULD SUIT YOU WE--

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
WHO WAS THAT?! FIND THEM!
TWAANG
GASP
WHAT THE HECK, KID?!
IF THEY SEE YA, WE'RE DONE FOR!
AH...
GULP
SMSH
IF JUST THROWING A KUNAI...
SMOKE BOMB
COST - 8 YEN
WHAT WAS THAT...
...WOULD BE AS UNSTEADY AS BALANCING ON A KNIFE'S EDGE, RIGHT?
OR SOME-THING, HA HA.
...COULD SEVER THE BOND BETWEEN US...
...THEN OUR HEARTS...
OH, WELL NOW!
HA HA HA.

1925
I MEAN FOR CHRISSAKES, YOU GOTTA LEAVE THIS STUFF TO THE PROS, YA KNOW! AN AMATEUR LIKE YOURSELF IS ONLY GONNA SCREW UP!
EVEN I'M PRETTY SURPRISED BY WHAT YOU DID.
PRO...

THEIR WILL TO KEEP THINGS TOGETHER WAS STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT.
GULP
I WON-DER...IF THE MATCH FAILED...

YOU MEAN THIS?
AH, CAN'T WE WRITE IT ON THAT ORDER FORM?
破談にしてくれーって
BREAK THIS MATCH. OR SOME-THING.
I THINK BOTH OF THEM KNEW THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT REASON BEHIND THIS MATCH.

...IN THAT BRIEF MOMENT?
.....
SORRY.

I MEAN, IT'S TRUE THERE'S NOTHING THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY.
BUT HUMANS ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE BOUGHT.
HMM... WELL, EVEN THESE SLIPS...
...AREN'T ACTUALLY MAGIC.
HMMM...
.....
IN THAT CASE, THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO TRY.

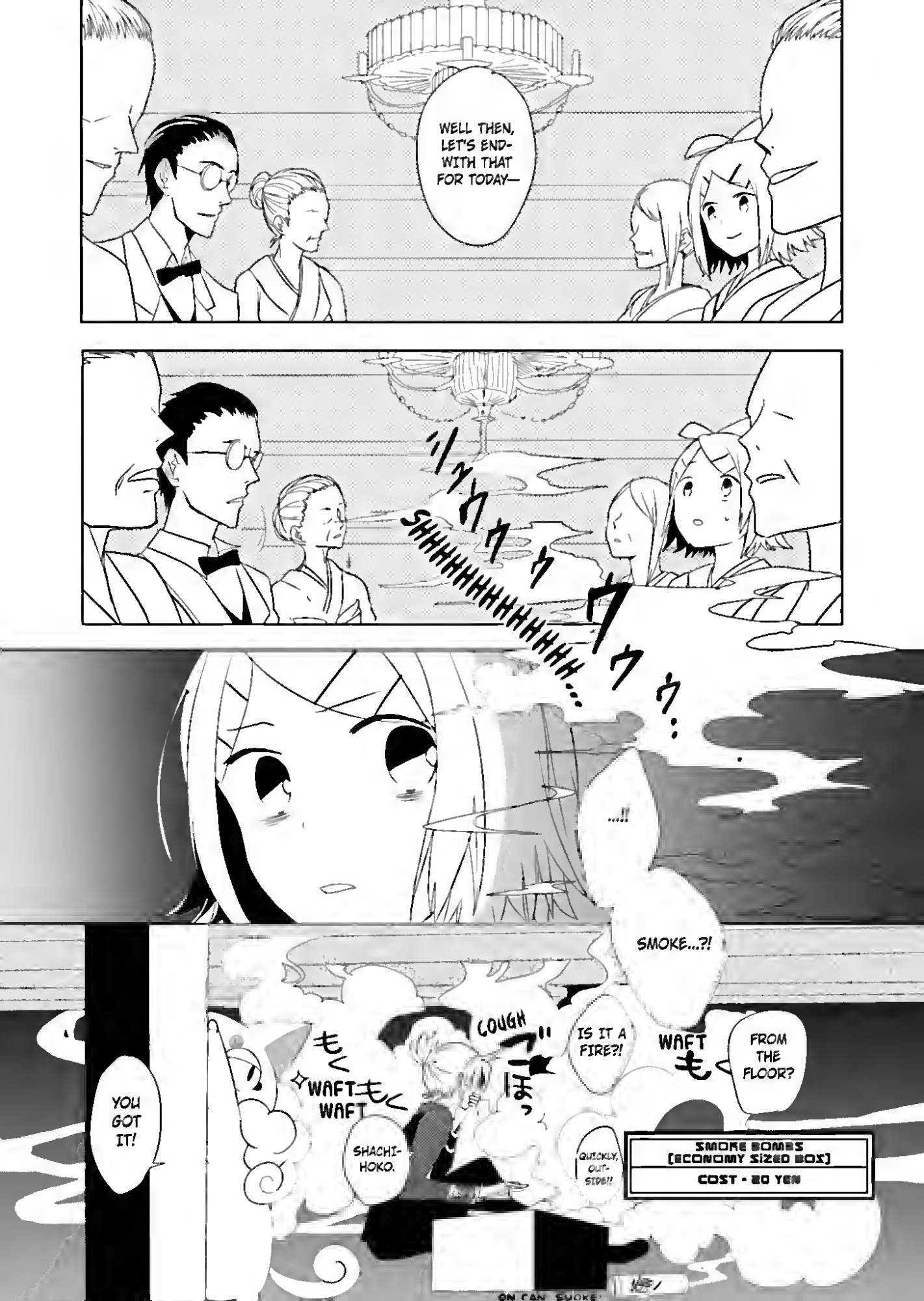
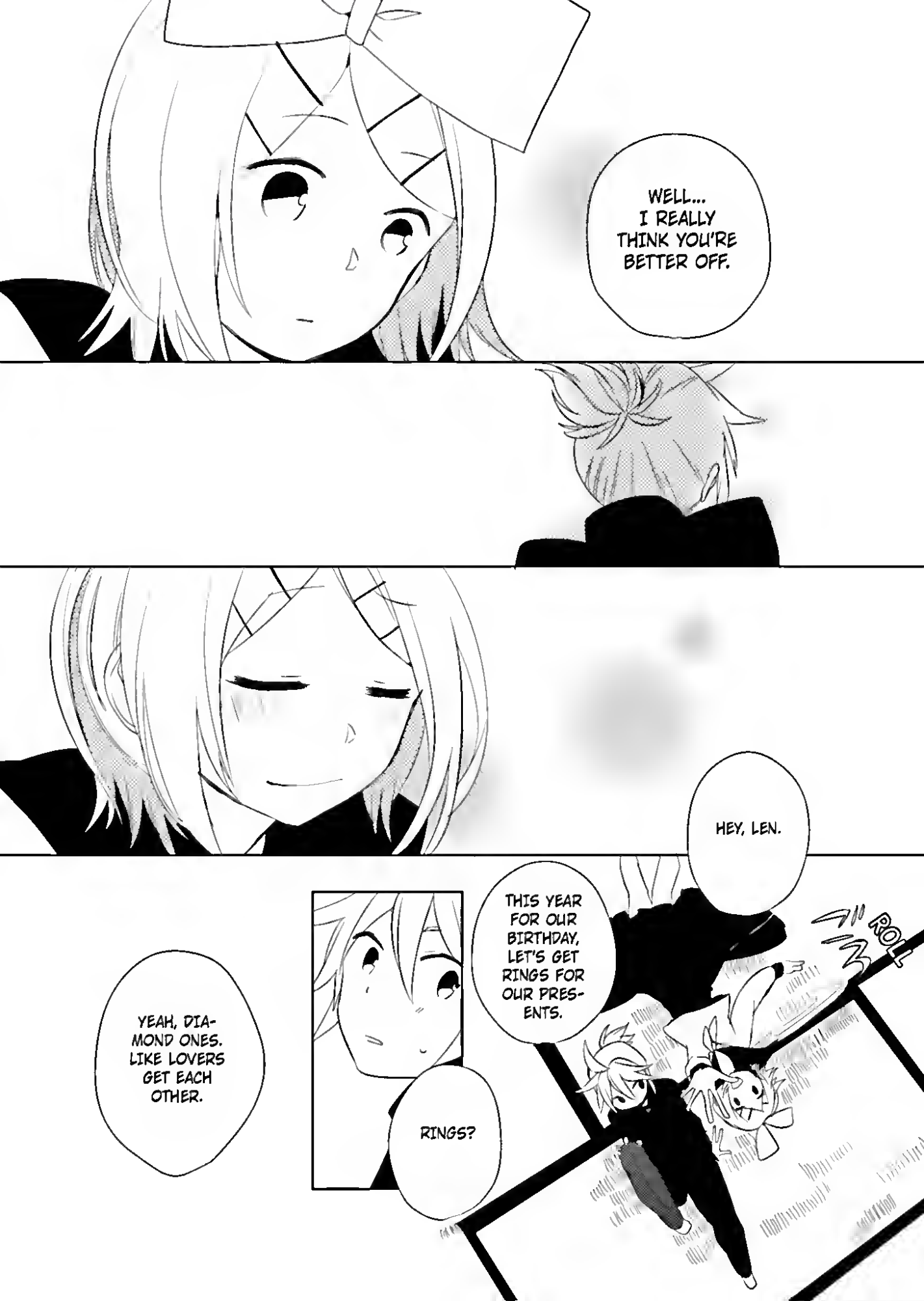

WELL THEN, LET'S END- WITH THAT FOR TODAY—
SHHHHHHHHHHHHH...
...!!
SMOKE...?!
IS IT A FIRE?!
COUGH
WAFT
FROM THE FLOOR?
もく
WAFT
WAFT
SHACHI-HOKO.
QUICKLY, OUT-SIDE!!
YOU GOT IT!
SMOKE BOMBS [ECONOMY SIZED BOX]
COST - 80 YEN
ON CAN SMOKE

DIAGRAM
SCRAPE
EEK!
IT CAN'T BE...
SCRAPE
THAT SCRAPING NOISE...
LET'S GET OUT... THE DOOR WON'T OPEN?!
SFX: SCRAAAATCH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
THE WIN-DOW!
LET'S GO OUT THROUGH THE WIN-DOW!!
WELL...
...NOW IT'S ALL UP TO MIKU.

A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE...?!
1925
THIS IS THE KANDA GHOST TRAIN...
I CURSE YOU...
I CURSE YOU...
UM...?!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
DAMN YOU! IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY! WHAT DO YOU WANT...?!

I DESPISE THOSE WHO HAVE MONEY, AND YET STILL RUN IN CIRCLES SEEKING MORE...
I DESPISE THOSE WHO MAKE BONDS FOR THAT REASON...
YOU WILL REGRET THIS...
FOR THE STAGE
YOUR BOND IS NOTHING MORE THAN THAT.
I HATE IT SO THAT I CANNOT HELP BUT CURSE YOU.
NEVER FORGET THIS CURSE I LAY UPON YOU...

HA... HA HA.
SHALL— SHALL WE END IT HERE?
IT'S A CURSE...
WE'RE CURSED
WE'LL MEET AGAIN ANOTHER DAY.
SO, I WAS FORMALLY REJECTED FOR THAT MARRIAGE CONTRACT.
HUHHH... WELL, OH WELL.
HMPH.
HUH?
O-OH...
THEY SAID IT WAS BE-CAUSE IT WAS CURSED.
SO I GUESS I'VE GOTTA GO TO A PRIEST TO BE CLEANSED.
I WISH HE'D SAID, "WHO CARES ABOUT THE CURSE OF A JEALOUS SPIRIT! I LOVE YOU ALL THE MORE FOR IT!"
YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING TOO MANY FRENCH FILMS.
OR SOME-THING...
PFH


WELL... I REALLY THINK YOU'RE BETTER OFF.
HEY, LEN.
THIS YEAR FOR OUR BIRTHDAY, LET'S GET RINGS FOR OUR PRES-ENTS.
ROLL
RINGS?
YEAH, DIA-MOND ONES. LIKE LOVERS GET EACH OTHER.

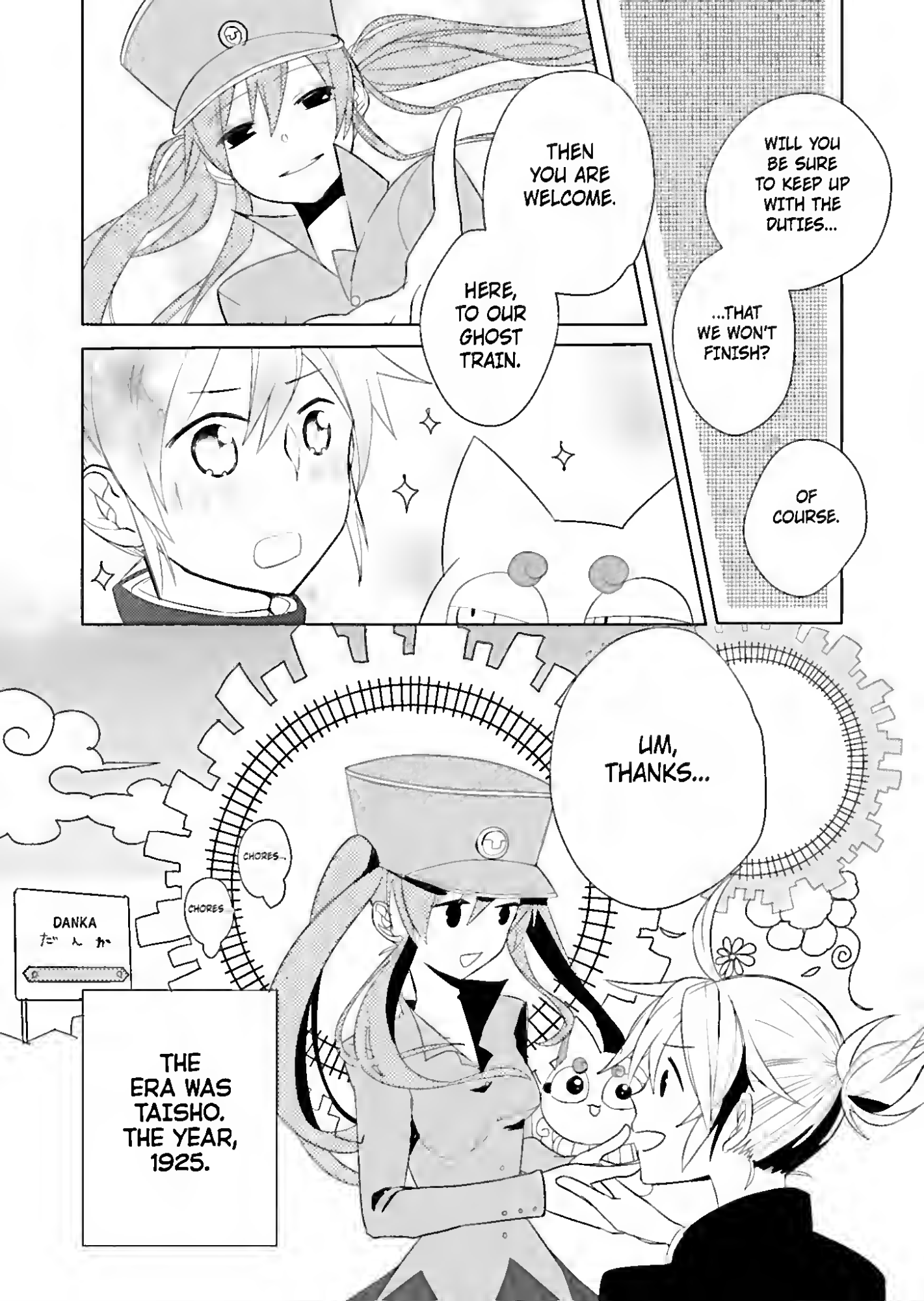
I WANT A SIGN OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.
JUST FOR THE TWO OF US.
CHOMP
GH...COULD YA HELP ME OUT JUST A LITTLE BIT?!
HOKKAIDO FAIR
大北海道展
DANKA
だんか
DAMN YOU! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GOT FRONT LEGS THAT CAN HOLD ONTO THE SHOVEL!!
I'M A LADY, I CAN'T DO PHYSICAL LABOR...
BEEEP
IF THIS KEEPS UP WE'RE REALLY NEVER GONNA BE ABLE TO GET THIS TRAIN MOVIN'.

SHE GOT WORD THAT THE CONTRACT WAS REJECTED.
SO...I GUESS IT ALL TURNED OUT ALL RIGHT.
CUDDLE CUDDLE
もふもふ
SO HOW'S YOUR SISTER BEEN?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
どうも
OH, THE BOY.
HELLO THERE.
WHAT'S UP, KID? YOU COME BACK 'COS YA MISSED ME SO MUCH?
HEY.
GLARE
YOU GUESS?

WELL, I KIND OF...
...NEED THE MONEY...
YOU WANT A JOB?!

WE'RE KIND OF BREAKING THE BANK JUST KEEPING UP APPEARANCES RIGHT NOW.
WELL, IT SEEMS LIKE THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TALK HAS DRIED UP.
THANKS どうも
A JOB...BUT DOESN'T YOUR FAMILY HAVE LOTS OF MONEY?
もふ～

AH.
KATUNK
カ
A
OR ANY OPEN LINES OF CREDIT...
AND YOU DON'T HAVE ANY SAVINGS RIGHT NOW.
YEAH, PROBA-BLY NOT.
ーン
I'LL DO ANY-THING!
A JOB...
ASIDE: WE DON'T NEED
NOD
LEN.


THEN YOU ARE WELCOME.
HERE, TO OUR GHOST TRAIN.
WILL YOU BE SURE TO KEEP UP WITH THE DUTIES...
...THAT WE WON'T FINISH?
OF COURSE.
UM, THANKS...
CHORES...
CHORES
DANKA
だ ん か
THE ERA WAS TAISHO. THE YEAR, 1925.

AND THEN, THE RING OF FATE BEGAN TO SPIN.
THESE THREE MET UP BY CHANCE, BUT THEIR FUTURE DESTINY WILL BE UNIMAGINABLE!!